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ABSTRACT

In recent years, almost all major changes and innovations in education have come out of suburban or urban schools, suggesting that rural schools are more resistant to change. The Myers-Briggs Type Instrument (MBTI) was completed by 86 school administrators to examine the extent to which the psychological traits of rural administrators might contribute to resistance to change in their districts. Respondents came from rural, suburban, and rural transitional districts--those in the process of becoming suburban. Of 16 possible MBTI personality types, 2 are characterized as supportive of the status quo and lacking in vision. These two types comprised 61 percent of rural administrators, 50 percent of rural transitional administrators, and 27 percent of suburban administrators. With regard to the diversity of personalities on the management team, only 7 personality types were found in the rural sample, while 12 types each were found in the rural transitional and suburban samples. Likewise, female administrators made up only 10 percent of the rural sample, compared to 16 percent of rural transitional and 29 percent of suburban administrators. Creating a quality school requires a diverse management team whose members' abilities complement each other. To build a school improvement team with the necessary diversity, superintendents must know their own and their fellow administrators' strengths and weaknesses, add personnel with the missing strengths, arrange for team training, and adjust workloads to provide time for team development. (SV)

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LEADERSHIP FOR A TIME OF CHANGE

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INTRODUCTION

Someone once said " All of us favor change as long as it doesn't affect us." Unfortunately, although this is probably true for a large percentage of us, we can no longer ignore the fact that change is inevitable. As a matter of fact, today change is occurring at an ever increasing rate throughout the world. The rate of technological change today far exceeds the rate anyone could have possibly imagined fifty years ago. The resulting gap between technological and sociological change continues to widen to the point that it is a cause of grave concern to our national leaders.

A major cause of this growing gap between technological and social change comes from the populace--you and me--as we seek to retain a degree of stability and predictability in our lives by resisting change. However, an equal contributor is the educational system--the very institution created to help society meet the needs of tomorrow's world. Schools, as one of the key social institutions in our society and one often used as instruments of change in the past, are being charged with doing major restructuring by our national leaders to help close this gap. Analysts and researcher say that the likelihood of education achieving this desired end is highly unlikely unless schools can come up with a new kind of leadership style---"transformational leadership". How does those type differ from the kind of leadership demonstrated by the majority of school administrators?

Over the years, research in terms of the psychological types of school administrators as determined by the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) has found the ESTJ type to be the epitome of a school "administrator", that is, one who is concerned with preserving the establishment and maintaining the status quo. According to Hoffman and Betkowski (1981)

> A synopsis of an ESTJ principal might read as follows: He is a practical, realistic, matter-of-fact, and concerned with the present state of affairs. Problems are analyzed with impersonal logic; he is unlikely to be convinced by anything but reasoning. This type of principal enjoys being an executive, deciding what ought to be done, and giving the necessary orders. However, employees beware, as he has little patience with inefficiency and knows how to be tough when the situation calls for it. While the ESTJ and ISTJ types are good at organizing and running schools, they may push fellow workers the wrong way by ignoring their viewpoint.

In sharp contrast, according to Bennis and Nanus (1985), the transformational leader:

1) Helps their organization develop a vision

2) Develops commitment and trust in the vision among followers through effective communication so that the changes become embodied in the organization's culture.
3) Facilitates organizational learning.

Tichy and Divanna (1986) add to this by saying the vision must be the product of a participative process involving all the key players in the organization who must embrace the vision for it to be successful.

One can readily see that, to accomplish the restructuring necessary, we will have to make some dramatic changes in the current dominant leadership styles and organizational operation in our schools.

An old Chinese philosopher, Lao Tsze, once said:

"He who knows others is learned;
"He who knows himself is wise."

It's a known fact. Before individuals can lead others, they must understand their own behavior and responses to given situations and people. Only then will they come to understand what causes them to respond the way they do to different situations.

As I've observed successful educational leaders in three different states over the past 25 years, I've noticed that all have two basic leadership skills that are used use in building their management teams:

1. They "know themselves"; their strengths and equally important their own weaknesses.
2. As they build their administrative team, they select people who have strengths where they have weaknesses and then turn them loose to do their job. They are successful team builders.

Is knowing oneself an innate skill that some have and others do not have, or is there something each of us can do to help us take a look at and understand ourselves?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For quite a number of years I've tried out a variety of different diagnostic instruments in an attempt to help potential educational leaders find an answer to this question. These instruments provided feedback to an individual relative to his/her preferred actions and responses to different situations with the intent that the individual would gain insight into his/her behavior. They also indicated why others may react differently to the same situation. Perhaps more important is the ability to use this knowledge to build a base

of understanding as to *why* others respond differently and how this diversity contributes to overall organizational strengths and effectiveness.

Recently, I settled upon the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) of psychological types in preference to other instruments. This was primarily because it is economical to use and has a vast amount of accumulated data collected over the years since its initial use in the 60's with which one can compare his/her findings. It is the MBTI that provided the basis for my look at the psychological types among principals and central office personnel. Over the past six years, I have collected MBTI types of school administrators and those preparing to be administrators so that I now have a database of over 350. However, for the purpose of this paper, I will be focusing on administrators in nine districts in southern Michigan in comparing leadership profiles in rural, transitional, and suburban districts. But, first the instrument.

THE INSTRUMENT

The MBTI is based on Carl Jung's theory of personality types. The mother-daughter combination of Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers developed the initial questionnaire which was first published by Educational Testing Service in 1962 for research purposes only. Since 1975 it has become the #1 used instrument in Human Resource Development. The instrument indicates our preferences, with each type having specific strengths and abilities.

Based on four sets of dimensions, there are sixteen possible combinations, each with 4 preference types that have a dominant and auxiliary in each with the higher number indicating the strength of the preference.

The sets of preferences are:

E= Extraversion <---------- 0 ---------->I= Introversion
Energizing by the outer world of persons, actions,and objects.
Energized by the inner world of concepts, ideas. Prefer solitude.

S= Sensing <---------- 0 ----------> N= Intuitive
Appreciate structure and certainly concerned with the immediate and practice.
Future-orientated. Concerned with new ideas and possibilities.

T= Thinking <---------- 0 ----------> F= Feeling
Makes judgements impersonally and logically. What makes logical results
Makes judgements on basis of how it affects others. Need friendly relations.

J= Judging <---------- 0 ----------> P= Perceiving

Like a decisive, planned, orderly life.	Enjoy spontaneity and flexibility.
Push for closure on problems.	Difficulty achieving closure.

*The Sixteen Types

Paired as Opposites and Percent of the General Population

INTP	(Architect)	1%	ESFJ	(Seller)	13%
ENTP	(Inventor)	5%	ESFJ	(Conservator)	6%
INTJ	(Scientist)	1%	ESFP	(Entertainer)	14%
ENTJ	(Fieldm'shal)	5%	ISFP	(Artist)	5%
INFP	(Questor)	1%	ESTJ	(Administrator)	13%
ENTP	(Journalist)	5%	ISTJ	(Trustee)	6%
INFJ	(Author)	1%	ESTP	(Prompter)	13%
ENFJ	(Pedagogue)	5%	ISTP	(Artisan)	6%

* Keirsey & Bates, Please Understand Me, Prometheus Nemesis, P.O. Box 2082, Del Mar, CA 92019, 1978.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, I have noticed that almost all of the major changes and innovations in education came out of schools in suburban and in some cases, urban settings. With the first successful restructuring efforts in creating quality schools, I found the same thing to be true. Why in suburban or urban schools and not in small more manageable rural schools? I decided to do a comparative study using the Myer-Briggs Type Instrument with educational administrators in three types of school districts -- suburban; rural transitional; and rural in an attempt to answer this question. In doing this study, I also sought to find the response to these three questions:

1. Are there certain characteristics of rural communities and their schools that tend to work against change and resistance to school restructuring?

2. To what degree do certain MBTI psychological types among school leaders in rural schools reinforce this resistance?
3. What kinds of activities can school leadership in rural settings undertake to accomplish the creation of a quality school?

PROCEDURES

In a previous study, I had used Monroe County, located midway between Detroit, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio & bordering Lake Erie primarily because of my previous knowledge of the area. During that study, I had solicited the support of the county

superintendent to meet with the district superintendents at their monthly meeting at the Monroe ISD in October 1991. At that time I proposed administering MBTI to their administrative staffs to use in team building. Once the responses were returned and answer sheets were scored, I indicated I would follow-up with several interpretations and team building sessions either by groups or by individual districts. During November I distributed the answer sheets and questionnaires to each of the districts. December was used for scoring and determining psychological types plus compiling handouts for providing feedback to each administrator who participated.
During February 1992, I held feedback sessions with the various administrative teams and discussed team building strategies.

I used all but one of the districts from this study and added a new one that I was in the process of working with for the comparison in this study.

In the total sample, there were nine school districts and 86 administrators. Four districts (18 administrators) were considered "rural". A rural district was defined as one which the school district was small and located in a predominantly farming area. In each of these four cases, the high school was located in a small community.

Three of the districts (34 administrators) were classified as "rural transitional" schools. These were districts that had at one time been rural communities, but were now experiencing the beginning signs of growth with new subdivisions bringing "outsiders" into their communities from the nearby cities of Detroit and Toledo. Two of the three districts had already built new high schools and the third several new elementaries.

The final two districts (34 administrators) were classified as "suburban" or bedroom communities, where subdivisions and multiple home complexes covered a sizeable part of the district's geographic area, and there were as many or more new residents than longtime residents.

RESULTS

The tables and graphs show major differences in the number and variety of MBTI types as one moves from Table I and Graph I--Rural Districts through Table II and Graph II--Rural transitional to Table III and Graph III--Suburban Districts. Here are just a few of the differences:

1) In the rural districts, 60.5% of the administrators are ESTJ's (55%) or ISTJ's (5.5%). In a like manner, almost 90% (16 of 18) of administrators are male. The tendency in these schools would be to maintain the status quo There was

TABLE 1

TYPE DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS
RURAL SCHOOLS

N=18

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N=2	N=2	N=0	N=0
5.5%	11.5%	0%	0%
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
N=0	N=1	N=0	N=0
0%	5.5%	0%	0%
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
N=0	N=1	N=0	N=1
0%	5.5%	0%	5.5%
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
N=10	N=1	N=0	N=0
55%	5.5%	0%	0%

	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
RURAL SCHOOLS	16	89%	2	11%

TABLE 2

TYPE DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS
RURAL TRANSITIONAL SCHOOLS

N=34

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N=5	N=2	N=0	N=1
14.7%	5.9%	0%	2.9%
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
N=0	N=1	N=1	N=0
0%	2.9%	2.9%	0%
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
N=0	N=1	N=3	N=1
0%	2.9%	8.84%	2.9%
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
N=12	N=3	N=1	N=3
35%	8.84%	2.9%	8.84%

	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
TRANSITIONAL SCHOOLS	29	85.3%	5	14.7%

TABLE 3

TYPE DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS
SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

N=34

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N=2	N=2	N=1	N=2
5.9%	5.9%	2.9%	5.9%
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
N=0	N=1	N=1	N=0
0%	2.9%	2.9%	0%
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
N=0	N=0	N=2	N=2
0%	0%	5.9%	5.9%
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
N=7	N=1	N=2	N=11
20.6%	2.9%	5.9%	32.4%

	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
SUBURBAN	24	71%	10	29%

TABLE 4

TYPE DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS
TOTAL SAMPLE

N=86

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N=9	N=6	N=1	N=3
10%	7%	1.5%	3.5%
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
N=0	N=3	N=2	N=0
0%	3.5%	2%	0%
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
N=0	N=2	N=5	N=4
0%	2%	6%	5%
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
N=29	N=5	N=3	N=14
34%	6%	3.5%	16%

MALES	%	FEMALES	%
67	78%	19	22%

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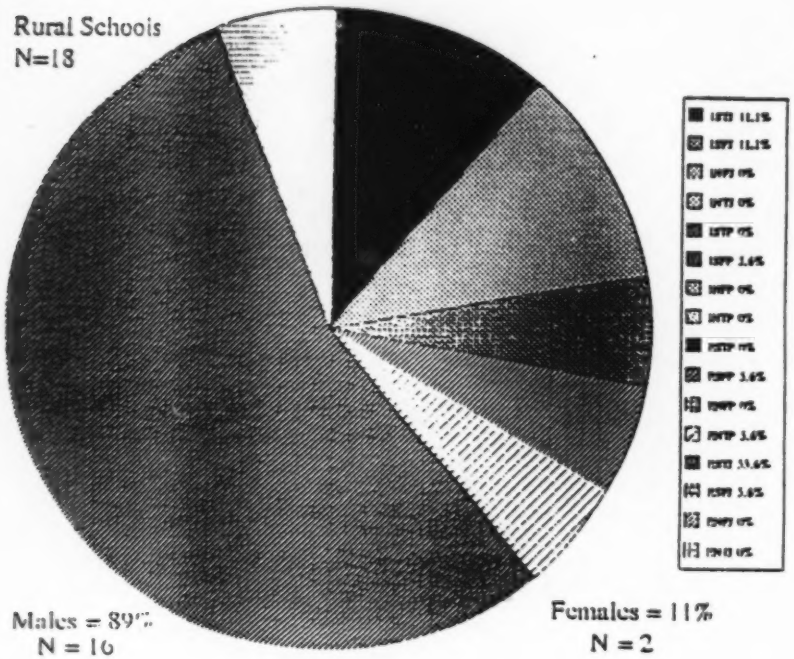
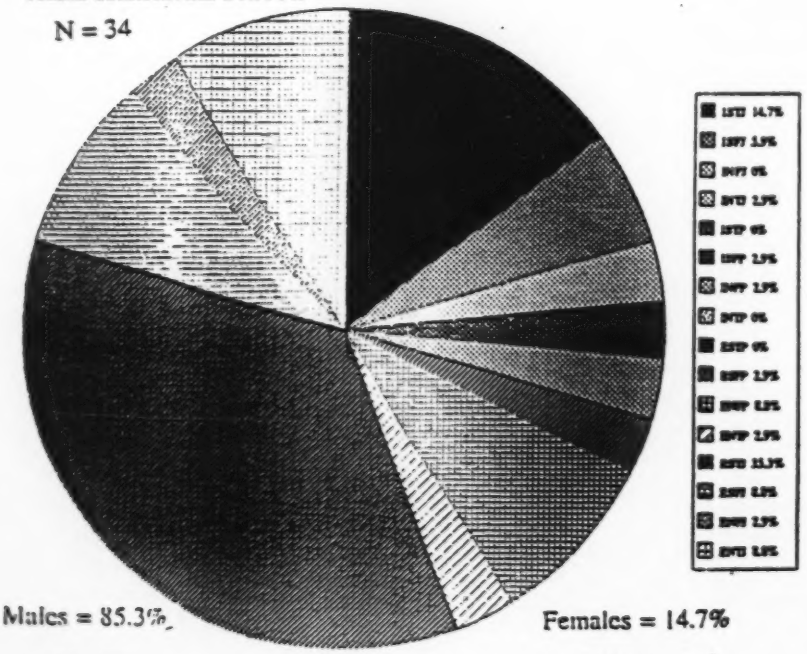
Rural Schools
N=18



Males = 89%
N = 16

Females = 11%
N = 2

Rural Transitional Schools
N = 34



Males = 85.3%
N = 29

Females = 14.7%
N = 5

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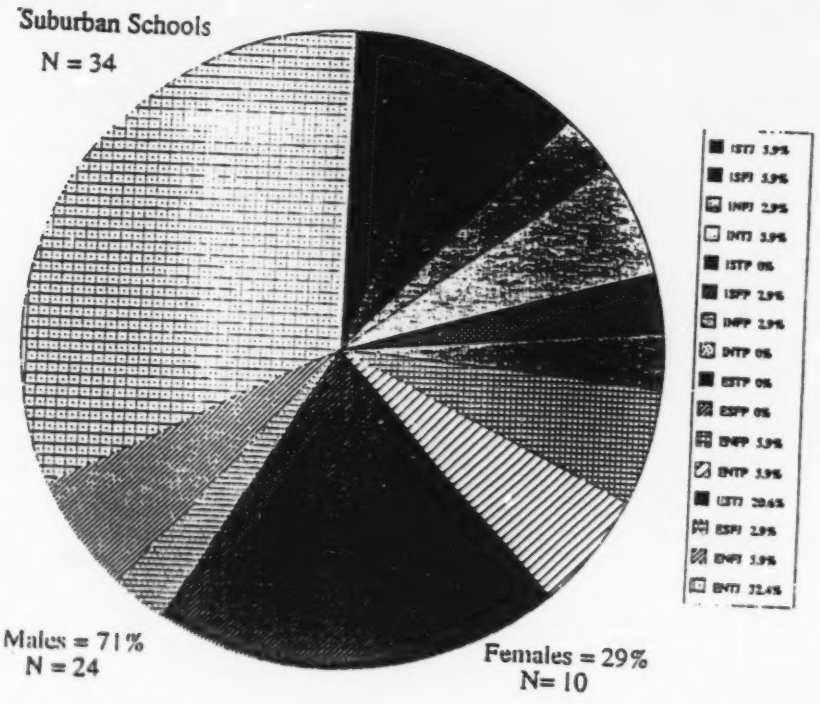
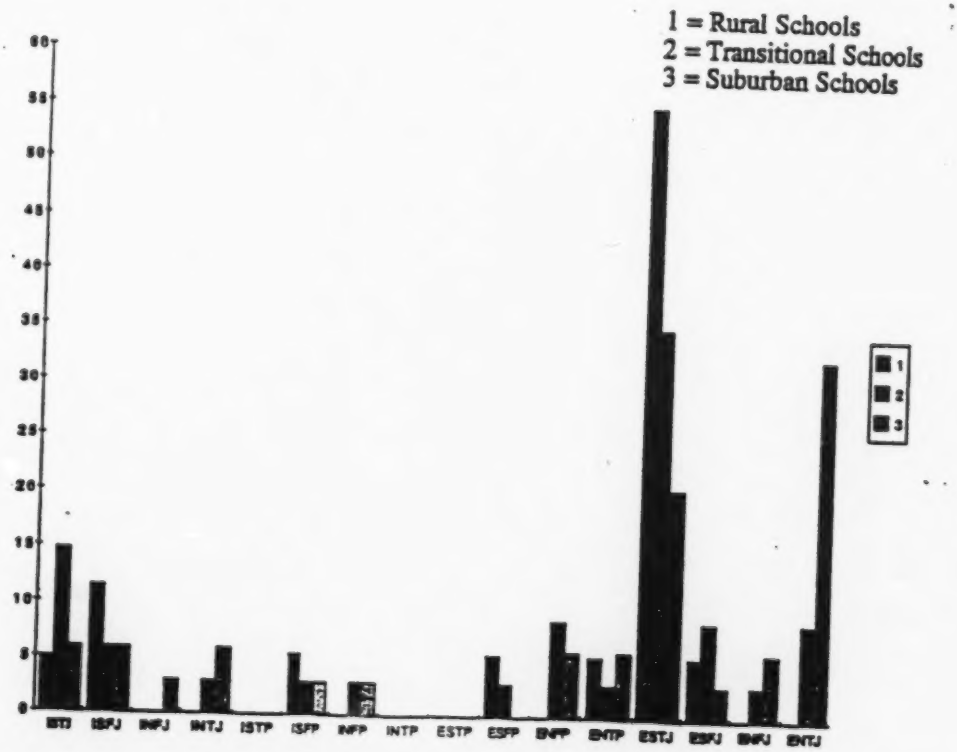

Suburban Schools
N = 34
Males = 71%
N = 24
Females = 29%
N= 10


1 = Rural Schools
2 = Transitional Schools
3 = Suburban Schools
ISTJ
ISFJ
INFJ
INTJ
ISTP
ISFP
INFP
INTP
ESTP
ESFP
ENFP
ENTP
ESTJ
ESFJ
ENFJ
ENTJ

only one Intuitive (N), an ENTP (5.5%), so three of the districts' administrative teams were devoid of any visionaries those often called upon to suggest new possibilities. In a like manner, only three of the eighteen administrators were Perceiving (P) or 16.5%. Over 83% (15) were J's (judging). 72% (13) were Thinking (T's) while 28% (5) were Feeling (F). Only seven of the 16 possible types were represented. The chance of a diverse management team without going outside the administrative group is highly unlikely in such situations.

2) As one moves to Table II and Graph II--Rural Transitional, we find the number of ESTJ's (35%) and ISTJ's (14.7%) has dropped to slightly under 50%. The percentage of males drops slightly to 34.5%. The number of N's (intuitives) increased to 29.9% as has the number of P's (perceiving) to 20.4%, while the J's (judging) dropped to just under 80%. The percentages of Thinking to Feeling stayed basically the same. (T's = 72%; F's = 28%) Perhaps of greater importance, this group now had 12 of the 16 possible types, and thus greater diversity. With the increase in diversity among types plus the infusion of more intuitives, the administrative teams of these two schools have a much greater potential of initiating school restructuring.

3) Among the 34 Types classified as "suburban", we find the ESTJ's make-up 20.6%, while the ISTJ's 5.9% or 26.5% combined. The percentage of males dropped to 71% while the number of females increased to 29%. The N's (intuitives) now outnumber the S's (sensing), with 61.8% being intuitives. The J's (judging) still far outnumber the P's (perceiving) with 82.8% being J's. Here again, 12 of the 16 types are represented. Change and restructuring will undoubtedly be the agenda in these two systems. However, caution must be exercised in that the "visionaries" now double the "doers", i.e. the ESTJ's and ISTJ's and thus their vision of quality schools may not come to fruition without balancing the management teams.

FINDINGS AS IT RELATES TO RURAL SCHOOLS

There is little doubt that the rural community itself has much to do with detering change. Most rural communities are homogeneous and usually closed to outsiders, especially those promoting change. Within the communities themselves there is little cultural diversity that often typifies suburban communities. Community members

prefer the status quo and cherish the "good old days". They are usually conservative, and feel they have a "good" school if it reflects *their* value systems and has good discipline.

The rural schools themselves are usually small and in many instances poor. They almost always are rich in tradition with close ties to their "community". Not only does the staff know the students, but often their families as well. In many instances a high percentage of the teaching staff has been born and raised in that area. Those working there are usually satisfied with the "what is" as long as they have a good administrator, discipline is maintained, and the staff does a good job teaching basic skills. In some localities, rural schools are also very isolated.

It's only natural that considering all the above, the types of administrators who are valued by both the community and the staff and are attracted to rural communities are ESTJ's or ISTJ's; they are good "administrators", run a tight ship, and maintain discipline. This rural administrative leadership is predominantly male.

The rural administrators enjoy greater longevity in their positions than their suburban counterparts because they have a homogeneous community to work with and a common value system. As a result, they have less conflict and stress. It is not as important to the community members that their administrators go back to the university for additional training and so they often are not as current as their suburban counterparts. Those administrators who do return for additional degrees often move to suburban systems. In addition, the rural administrator had limited support staff, so they must fulfill multiple roles.

In looking at the MBTI types of rural administrators, over 60% were ESTJ's or ISTJ's. Only one of the eighteen was an N (intuitive), the one type that often is the visionary and much more prone to change and promote change. The superintendent of one of the four districts, who found all of his administrators were ESTJ's, said to me, " We're so much alike we can't even get in a good argument". 89% of the school leadership in these communities were males. The Superintendent of each of the four districts believed it was important that they work with their administrative team and teaching staff in bringing about restructuring, but were not certain how to go about it.

MAKING SUCCESSFUL CHANGE IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Rural communities have been for many years the bastion of American values and traditions. These long-cherished characteristics of rural American communities are not only prized by the community members, but passed on to the younger generation by the

schools. The administrative and teaching staff often reflect these same values. However, the very characteristics that for so long made rural communities the place where many young couples wanted to raise their children may ultimately lead to their demise unless school and community leadership can make the necessary changes. As indicated, rural superintendents are vitally interested in creating a quality school, but not sure how to proceed. Rural schools *can* achieve the necessary restructuring needed, but will have to work twice as hard to accomplish it because of the obstacles previously stated.

All of the current educational restructuring efforts use some form of participative decision-making or team management. Hoffman (1986) points out the importance of diversity of types in any kind of team effort:

> Everyone cannot be all things and using the strengths of the various psychological types for team management is likely to result in a better decision or product. Keirsey and Bates (1978) have describes some temperament management strengths which are summarized as follows:
>
> The SJ on a management team will help preserve traditions, and pay attention to important details, policies and regulations for operationalizing a smooth-running system. The NF will a a personalized people-centered point of view, assist in public relations, and be supportive and attentive to other team members' points of view. The NT adds an enthusiasm to the possibilities of ideas and planned change. The SP (or possibly the EP of Myers) will spur action and detect early signs of trouble. Having an instinct for getting people to cooperate, this person makes business a pleasure.

Yet we can see from the rural composite, this variety in types is sadly lacking.

Blaylock (1983) conducted a study comparing homogeneous teams with heterogeneous teams:

> A homogeneous team is composed of members with the same perception and judgement preferences. These individuals will share similar, but limited, experiences which result in limited, but shared approaches to problems. From this common experiential base, there is high potential for effective communications and decreased potential for conflict. This group is said to be compatible, and compatibility is an important prerequisite to team productivity. (1961)

> A heterogeneous team is composed of members with different perception and judgment preferences. These differences enhance the problem solving capability of the team because the strengths of one member complement the weakness of another. Unfortunately, each team member is less likely to understand or appreciate the problem-solving approaches of others. The resulting conflicts and communication difficulties may neutralize the problem-solving advantages of the complementary group.

In his conclusion, he went on to say:

> Complementary groups significantly outperformed compatible groups. Communication and problem-solving conflicts anticipated due to type differences never materialized, which allowed these teams to examine the production task, absorb it complexities, establish a plan of actions, and execute it in an effective manner.

As on can see from the analysis of the present rural management teams, they are largely homogeneous, so diversity must be built in.

For the rural superintendent to build a diverse management team will require knowledge of types and utilization of both school and community membership. To change the school without impacting the community would be a major oversight. Community representation is critical. If the community is not "brought along", in the long run the effort will probably fail.

A word of caution must be sounded at this point. Without major staff development efforts involving the management team in the importance of appreciating "gifts differing" visioning, team building, consensus decision-making, and conflict resolution techniques the group could easily decline into confusion and refuse to work together. In like manner, providing the time free of schools problems and infringement is critical. Team members cannot possibly do all the things they are presently doing and be expected to add this responsibility to them. Adjusting workloads is part of the administrative responsibility.

Creating a quality school is a challenge in any school district. However, here are some guidelines to building a school improvement team that has the necessary diversity, irrespective of the type of district.

1. **The district leader must first know himself/herself--both strengths and weaknesses.**

2. **He/she must know the strengths and weaknesses of fellow administrators**

3. **Other personnel must be added either from the teaching staff or the community, who have strengths where weaknesses exist.**

4. **Before undertaking the creation of a vision for the district in terms of steps to take in creating a quality school, the team must undergo training in:**
   a. **The value of different types**
   b. **Visioning**
   c. **Consensus decision making**
   c. **Team building and developing trust**
   d. **Resolving conflict**

5. **Providing time for staff development and adjusting workloads.**

6. **The district leader must feel comfortable in the role of facilitating leadership development.**

Then and only then can we move forward towards the successful creation of a quality school.

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